



## Press Release

# Millennium Challenge Corporation Board of Directors Selects Timor- Leste for New Compact; The Gambia for New Threshold Program

For Immediate Release  
December 19, 2017

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WASHINGTON, D.C., December 19, 2017 – At its quarterly meeting on December 19, the U.S. Government’s Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) Board of Directors selected Timor-Leste for a compact– MCC’s five-year grant program designed to spur economic growth and reduce poverty. The MCC Board of Directors selected The Gambia for a threshold program – MCC’s smaller grant program focused on policy and institutional reform.

“I am pleased to announce new partnerships with Timor-Leste through MCC’s compact program and The Gambia through MCC’s threshold program,” MCC Chief Operating Officer **Jonathan Nash** said. “MCC investments promote economic growth and reduce poverty, creating more stable, secure countries with new business opportunities abroad.”

MCC works to improve lives and transform communities around the world by focusing on one mission: reducing poverty through economic growth. The agency provides time-limited grants and assistance to developing countries that meet rigorous standards for good governance, from fighting corruption to respecting democratic rights.

Timor-Leste was initially selected by the MCC Board to develop a threshold program in

December 2016. Since that time, the Government of Timor-Leste has demonstrated a clear commitment to good governance, investing in its people and economic freedom, as evidenced by Timor-Leste's 2018 MCC scorecard. The Board voted to move Timor-Leste into the compact program based on this continued strong performance.

As part of the annual selection process, the Board also reselected Burkina Faso, Mongolia, Senegal, Sri Lanka, and Tunisia, enabling the development of compacts in those countries to continue. In addition, the Board reselected Lesotho after a two-year hiatus, recognizing Lesotho's concrete steps over the past year that demonstrate a commitment to addressing MCC's ongoing rule of law concerns. While the decision will allow Lesotho to restart the development of its second compact, the Board noted that it will continue to closely monitor the situation on the ground.

The selection of The Gambia will give MCC the opportunity to engage with the country on needed reforms as the country continues its democratic transition. The Gambia is an important partner in West Africa, where MCC already has a strong presence.

With regard to Togo, the Board is encouraged by the possibility of inclusive dialogue as a way to resolve the current political impasse, and will continue to monitor developments on the ground before making a decision about the proposed threshold program.

The government of the Philippines has decided not to move forward with the development of a second MCC compact. MCC is proud of the achievements of our first compact with the Philippines, and both MCC and the United States are proud of our longstanding positive relationship.

Find out more about MCC's selection process on our Who We Fund web page.

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*The Millennium Challenge Corporation is an independent U.S. Government agency working to reduce global poverty through economic growth. Created in 2004, MCC provides time-limited grants and assistance to poor countries that meet rigorous standards for good governance, from fighting corruption to respecting democratic rights. Learn more about MCC at [www.mcc.gov](http://www.mcc.gov).*